

Helping Children Develop Healthy Eating Habits

There are many ways child care givers and parents can help children develop healthy eating habits. Remember that healthy eating is not only eating healthy foods. Providing a safe and nurturing atmosphere and letting children be involved in purchasing and preparing foods also promote healthy eating habits.

Healthy Eating Tips for Parents

1. Children model your eating habits. Make healthy food choices.
2. Follow the suggestions in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *MyPyramid*. Eat plenty of whole-grain foods, fruits, and vegetables, and include lean meats and lowfat dairy foods. Check out the *MyPyramid* resources for kids at www.mypyramid.gov/kids.
3. Encourage children to try a variety of foods. Remember children have a right not to like a food. Children may begin to like new foods when they are offered repeatedly.
4. Remember children need food often. It is normal for children to eat three meals and three snacks a day.
5. Serve children small servings and let them request second helpings. Let children decide how much to eat.
6. Plan times for family meals with everyone at the table. Involve each child in the conversation during the meal.
7. Let children help with preparing simple foods for snacks and meals. For example, ask small children to help tear lettuce for a salad. Allow them to help measure ingredients for a recipe.
8. Avoid power struggles with children over food. Never bribe or threaten children with food. Rewarding children with food or withholding food as punishment gives the wrong message about food and eating.
9. Encourage healthy snacks by keeping a supply of healthy choices on hand, such as fresh fruit and vegetables, reduced-fat cheese, peanut butter, crackers, milk, and fruit juices.
10. Stay physically active. Choose family activities that involve moving rather than sitting. Exercise is good for parents and children!



Mealtime Memo FOR CHILD CARE



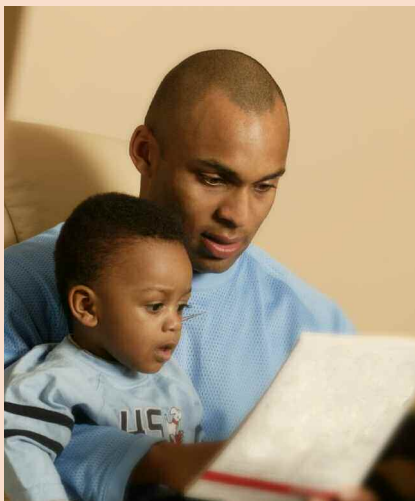
Get children involved with food!

Getting children involved with food can be as easy as talking to them about your choices while shopping at the grocery store. Try some of the following tips for helping your children learn about food and enjoy the process of purchasing, preparing, and serving food.

- Point out various fresh fruits and vegetables while grocery shopping.
- Visit a garden or farmer's market.
- Plant some seeds, either in a garden or flower pot.
- Let your child help you prepare meals and snacks. Picture cookbooks make it easier for children to follow recipes.
- Teach your child how to set the table.
- Read nursery rhymes about food and then talk about the food. Plan to have the food for a meal or snack. Some well-known nursery rhymes and stories include:
 - * Humpty Dumpty
 - * Little Miss Muffet
 - * Little Red Riding Hood
 - * Pease Porridge Hot
 - * The Three Bears



Read children's books about food and eating. Many are available from your local public library. Here are a few ideas:



- *A Beautiful Day for a Picnic* by N. Curry
- *Eating the Alphabet: Fruits and Vegetables from A to Z* by L. Ehlert
- *Green Eggs and Ham* by Dr. Seuss
- *Growing Vegetable Soup* by L. Ehlert
- *How to Eat Your ABC's* by H. Jones
- *Leo, the Lettuce Lion and his Vegetable Kingdom* by D. Wolf
- *Oliver's Fruit Salad* by V. French
- *Oliver's Vegetables* by V. French
- *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* by E. Carle

Recipe to Try

Children will enjoy these miniature-sized meat loaves.

Tiny Meat Loaves D-04C¹

Raw ground beef (no more than 20% fat)	1 lb 4 oz
Raw ground turkey	1 lb 4 oz
Fresh onions, chopped	½ cup
OR	OR
Dehydrated onions	3 Tbsp
Fresh celery, ¼" diced	2 cups
Rollled oats	2 ½ cups
Enriched dry bread crumbs	1 cup
Frozen whole eggs, thawed	1 cup 3 Tbsp
OR	OR
Fresh large eggs	6 each
Canned tomato sauce	1 ¼ cups
Canned tomato paste	2 Tbsp
Worcestershire sauce	1 Tbsp 1 tsp
Salt	2 tsp
Ground black or white pepper	1 tsp



In a mixing bowl, using the paddle attachment combine all ingredients. Mix on low speed for 5 minutes until blended. Using a No. 12 scoop (⅓ cup), portion meat mixture and shape into meat loaves. Place meat loaves (3 x 4) onto two pans (9" x 13" x 2"). Bake: Conventional oven: 350 °F for 30 minutes. Convection oven: 325 °F for 30 minutes. If desired, baste tiny meat loaves with meat glaze (D-04¹) or Salsa (C-03¹) before baking. Bake for 15 minutes as directed. Remove from oven and baste again and continue baking for 15 minutes. Heat to 165 °F or higher for at least 15 seconds. Hold for hot service at 135 °F or higher.

Number of servings: 24

Serving size: 1 loaf provides the equivalent of 1 ½ oz cooked lean meat, ⅓ cup of vegetable, and the equivalent of ½ slice of bread.

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

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Breakfast Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Whole Wheat Muffin Squares A-11A ¹ Orange sections Milk	Whole wheat toast with all-fruit spread Diced pears Milk	Whole-grain English muffin with fruit- flavored cream cheese Banana slices Milk	Toasted oat cereal Fresh strawberries Milk	Banana Bread Squares A-13 ¹ Apricot halves Milk

Lunch Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Banana-Peanut Butter ² Sandwich F-03A ¹ Carrot sticks Milk	Tiny Meat Loaves D-04C ¹ Green salad with lowfat dressing Pineapple chunks Milk	Roasted chicken Whole kernel corn Steamed broccoli Whole wheat roll Milk	Bean Burrito D-21A ¹ Mexicali Corn I-15 ¹ Apple slices Milk	Oven Baked Fish D-09 ¹ Baked Sweet Potatoes and Apples I-08 ¹ Green beans Corn Muffin A-02 ¹ Milk

Snack Menus

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Lowfat yogurt Peach halves Water ³	Blueberry Muffin Squares A-16B ¹ Milk Water ³	String cheese Wheat crackers Water ³	Pita bread with melted cheese Water ³	Granola bar Grapes Water ³

¹USDA Recipes for Child Care. Available online at www.nfsmi.org.

²Sunflower butter can be substituted for peanut butter.

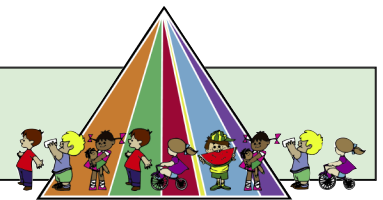
³Water is suggested as a beverage for all snacks even when other beverages are offered to encourage children to drink water.

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Sources

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